THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) and (b) Commercial exploitation of polymetallic nodules will take place only in future, after we have developed or acquired mining technology. Meanwhile, detailed survey and exploration work are being carried out. R&D work on the extraction of metals from nodules is being conducted in four laboratories and some of the process routes followed by them are in semi-pilot stage.

(c) No firm estimate can be made at this stage on the total financial implication involved in the commercial exploitation of polymetallic nodules.

Steps for Normalcy in Sri Lanka

1045. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken steps to bring back normalcy in Sri Lanka;

(b) whether any fresh treaty is proposed to be signed between India and Sri Lanka;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) what are the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The Government of Sri Lanka had handed over the draft of a proposed treaty of friendship. During president Jayawardene's recent visit to India, the Sri Lankan side suggested that the draft could be discussed later after the Indian side had time to examine it.

IAF Transport and Helicopter Crew

1046. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the transport and helicopter crew of the Indian Air Force are subject to more than the ordinary stresses and strains of the service owing to the vulnerability of the machines, helliborne landing of troops in hostile situations, and so on;

(b) whether it is also a fact that cardio-vascular complaints are one of the major reasons for grounding air crew; and

(c) if so, what steps Government are taking to provide the best medical attention to the Indian Air Force transport and helicopter crew?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. However, their incidence among aircrew is not higher than in Ground Duty Officers.

(c) The best medical care in Armed Forces hospitals is provided to all aircrew. In addition, highly specialised treatment in civil hospitals is also made available, where required.

Disinformation being published by Pakistan against India

1047. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item published in 'Hindustan Times' dated 26th December, 1987 under the caption "Pak preventing visits to India by publishing all kinds of disinformation against India"; and